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The *Queensland Government Position Statement on Immigration*
was endorsed by the Queensland Government in October 1999

Preamble

Australia's immigration program has made an important contribution to the development of Queensland. The current rich mix of cultural and linguistic diversity continues to develop the cultural, social and economic life of the State.

Queensland recognises that immigration contributes to economic development throughout the State, through creation of new jobs and businesses, as well as increasing demand for services and products. Migrants bring with them new ideas, skills and expertise, and help to create international trade and business links.

Queensland's population growth, driven largely by interstate and overseas migration, contributes to the State's economic performance.¹ Population growth expands the domestic market for locally produced goods and services, both in the short and long run. This, in turn, increases employment, income and economic growth. As a result of the rapid population growth that occurred in Queensland over the past decade, private consumption expenditure accounted for almost 70% of Queensland's economic growth over this period, substantially more than its 61% share of gross state product.

Immigration increases economic and cultural capital, and Queensland supports a migration program which continues to add to the productive diversity of the State.

Queensland's response to immigration policy is governed by the Multicultural Queensland Policy, which has as its core principles: *access* - equitable access to services and programs; *participation* - the right of all Queenslanders to participate and benefit from all aspects of life in Queensland; and *cohesion* - the responsibility of all Queenslanders to develop a cohesive and harmonious society.

¹ All data in this paragraph is from the Office of Economic and Statistical Research, Queensland Treasury.

History of migration to Queensland

Since 1824, when the first non-Indigenous people began to move into the region, the population of Queensland has been shaped by immigration. In addition to British and Irish immigrants, German immigrants and Chinese and Indian indentured labourers were amongst the first arrivals.

Queensland became a separate colony in 1859. At that time, there was a non-Indigenous population of 23,520.² By 1880, there were over 200,000 people in Queensland. This population growth was only achieved by large scale immigration from other colonies of Australia, and overseas.

During the 1870s, the Queensland locally born population exceeded the overseas born for the first time. Queensland pursued a vigorous policy of assisted packages for immigrants - 200,000 people were assisted to migrate to the State between the years 1861 and 1900. Unlike other colonies, Queensland also emphasised assisted passages for non-British settlers, in particular, Germans and Scandinavians.

Between 1863 and 1904, approximately 55,000-60,000 Pacific Islander people were brought to Australia - sometimes involuntarily or under coercion - to work as indentured labourers. The descendants of these people are now recognised as a distinct ethnic group, Australian South Sea Islanders, the majority of whom live in Queensland.

At the start of this century, the White Australia policy, combined with World War One, saw the adoption of inward looking approaches such as assimilation and monoculturalism, despite the fact that Queensland had the most ethnically diverse population at that time.

After World War Two, there was another influx of immigrants from countries affected by the war. Many refugees came to Queensland as Australia fulfilled some of its humanitarian responsibilities and each State looked for ways to boost its population.

Since World War Two, assimilationist policies have given way to integrationist policies and, during the 1970s, to the policy of multiculturalism.

Australia now has a non-discriminatory immigration policy, whereby applications are assessed according to the migration criteria of the day. Migrants are currently chosen from two broad categories, the Skilled Stream and the Family Stream, while the Humanitarian Program caters for those people in urgent need of resettlement.

Since the early 1980s, Queensland's share of the nation's net overseas migration has averaged around 12%, although the actual number of migrants has varied considerably. The largest number of migrants in Queensland arrived in 1988-89 and involved 21,776 persons in net terms, or 13.8% of the nation's net overseas migration. In 1997-98, 16,918 persons arrived in net terms in Queensland, representing 15.9% of the nation's net overseas migration. For a profile of Queensland's immigration intake and population growth, see Appendix A.

Queensland Immigration: Key Principles

Queensland is committed to an immigration policy which is non-discriminatory with respect to race, religion, country of origin or gender. Queensland supports a migration program which remains flexible and able to respond to changing circumstances and needs.

A policy which balances skilled, regional, family and humanitarian immigration will ensure that Australia's social and economic welfare is accorded a high priority, while also showing sufficient regard to Australia's humanitarian obligations. Outlined below are the key priorities underpinning Queensland's position on immigration policy.

Temporary Migration

Queensland attracts a large number of visitors, working holiday makers, students, business and professional people each year. Queensland welcomes this influx of visitors as they bring new ideas, connections and prosperity to the State. Although they make some demands on infrastructure and the environment, these visitors also make a significant contribution to the social and economic life of the State, through additional skills, jobs, export earnings, investment and technological transfer.³

Regional Settlement

The interests of Queensland will be best served by strategies which encourage migrants to settle in regional areas which can offer employment or business opportunities, with a view to stimulating regional economies.

The Queensland Government recognises that migrants will settle successfully in areas with infrastructure and support services appropriate to their needs. Queensland would not support any policy which subjected migrants to coercion in making decisions about where to settle. Queensland supports freedom of choice and movement for all migrants to the State.

² Indigenous people were not counted in a census until 1966 so these figures do not represent the complete population picture.

³ Factsheet 60. Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. 14 October 1998.

Skilled/Business Migration

Queensland supports strategies to attract skilled migrants to settle in the State. Skilled migration presents the opportunity to develop trade and business links in traditional and new overseas markets, as well as create employment and business opportunities within the State.

Talented Migration

Queensland supports initiatives to recruit migrants who are distinguished in their fields of endeavour. In particular, Queensland supports a broad view of the talented category, which includes those who are academically, athletically or artistically gifted, and those who have demonstrated entrepreneurial, innovative or creative skills.

Family migration

Queensland recognises the value of family migration. Family migration ensures that people settle more easily and thereby participate more readily in all aspects of life in Queensland. Having a strong family component of the immigration program recognises the central role that families play in developing cohesive community relations and networks.

Humanitarian migration

The Humanitarian Program, which includes both onshore and offshore refugee claimants, is an important responsibility flowing from Australia's membership of the world community. Although the Commonwealth has core responsibility for refugees, the Queensland Government is committed to working with the Commonwealth to ensure that services for this vulnerable group of people are appropriate and effective.

Integrated Services

In keeping with the principles of equity and access, all aspects of the immigration program should be underpinned by effective Commonwealth services to assist the settlement of new migrants and their families.

An integrated, co-ordinated immigration policy is desirable, to ensure that migrants are able to access government, private and community sector settlement support services. Queensland supports a consultative, flexible policy which evolves according to the experiences and needs of migrants. The continual monitoring and review of policy and services is essential, to ensure that service provision is delivered effectively.

Queensland is committed to ensuring that migrants can access relevant human services, such as health care,

education, training opportunities, housing, and family support services.

Whole of Government Perspective

It is desirable for immigration policy to be considered in the context of related policy considerations, such as health, education, training, employment, tourism, housing, and consumer education and information services. This will ensure that public resources are administered with maximum efficiency and equity, and that service delivery is streamlined and effective.

Implementation - Queensland's Role

While responsibility for immigration policy lies with the Commonwealth Government, Queensland will work to implement, review and monitor immigration and settlement policy issues in the following ways:

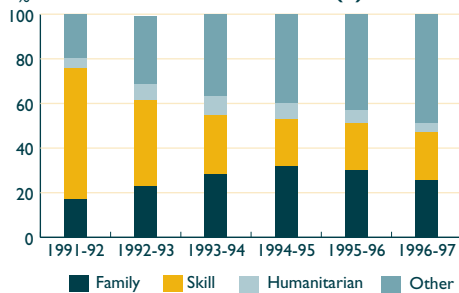
1. Queensland will encourage continued consultation with the Commonwealth on the size and the composition of annual intakes, advocating long range planning and consistency in the migration program;
2. Queensland will play a proactive role in consulting with the Commonwealth in relation to immigration policy development;
3. Queensland will maintain close dialogue with the Commonwealth on the funding and management of effective settlement services;
4. Queensland will continue to participate actively in the National Integrated Settlement Strategy, a national planning framework which has responsibility for linking and improving services available to migrants and refugees in Australia; and
5. Queensland will continue to work actively to ensure that migrants can access relevant Queensland Government services, in keeping with the principles of access, participation and cohesion which underpin the Multicultural Queensland Policy.

Appendix A - Demographic background

Overseas Migration

At the time of the 1996 census, overseas born people represented 16.7% of Queensland's population. Figure 1 below provides an overview of settler arrivals to Queensland by eligibility category between 1991-92 and 1997-98.* Note that the majority of people entering under the "other" category are from New Zealand. Figure 2 provides a detailed breakdown of arrivals by eligibility category for 1997-98. Figure 3 provides a snapshot of the region of birth of recent arrivals to Queensland. Again,

Settler Arrivals by eligibility category, Queensland, 1991-92 to 1997-98 (a)



(a) A change in definition occurs in the Family and Skill categories between 1996-97 and 1998-98. From 1 July 1997 the Concessional Family category was moved to the Skill Stream to reflect changes to the requirement such as age and work skills as well as various sponsor attributes.

Source: Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, unpublished data

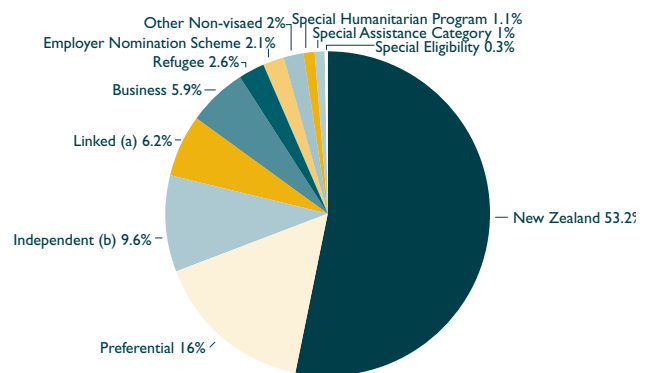
Fig. 1 Settler arrivals by eligibility category, 1991-92 to 1997-98

the majority of people entering under the "other" category are New Zealand citizens.

Interstate Migration

Net interstate migration has for many years been the major component of Queensland's population growth, although the difference between interstate and overseas migration has narrowed in recent years, as indicated in Figure 4, below. Nonetheless, in 1997-98 Queensland still attracted 75% of net positive interstate flows, the only other states to record net positive interstate migration being Western Australia (20%) and Victoria (5%).

Settler Arrivals by eligibility category, Queensland, 1997-98 (per cent of total)

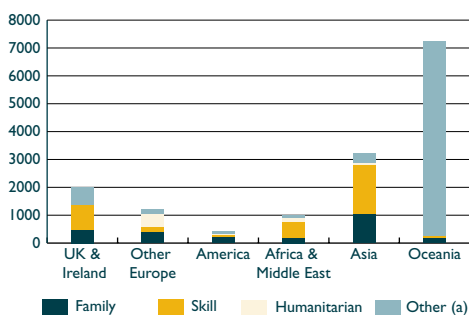


(a) Includes Australian Linked and Regional Linked, and Concessional visa holders issued before 1 July 1997 but who arrived on or after 1 July 1997.
(b) Includes Distinguished Talent Category.

Source: Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, unpublished data

Fig. 2 Settler arrivals by eligibility category 1997-98 (as a percentage of total settler arrivals for 1997-98)

Settler Arrivals by eligibility category and region of birth, Queensland, 1997-98

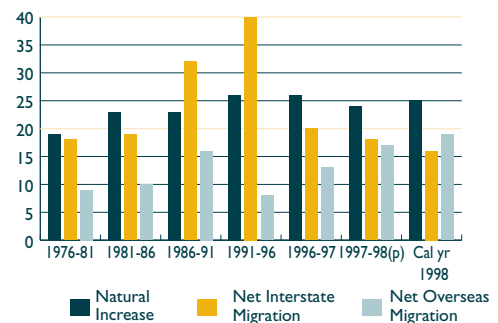


(a) Includes special eligibility and non-program migration

Source: Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, unpublished data

Fig. 3 Settler arrivals by eligibility category by region of birth, Queensland, 1997-98

Components of Population Change



(p) Preliminary 1998 estimates year ended 30 June

Source: ABS Cat. Number 3101.0

Fig. 4 Components of Population Change

* All graphs provided courtesy of Planning Information and Forecasting Unit, Department of Communication and Information, Local Government and Planning

Temporary Migration

At any given time, thousands of temporary overseas entrants form part of Queensland's population, although these people do not figure in the official Migration and Humanitarian Programs. These people include temporary residents, students, visitors and business or professional people. A profile of temporary residents in Queensland throughout 1998 is shown in Figure 5, below.

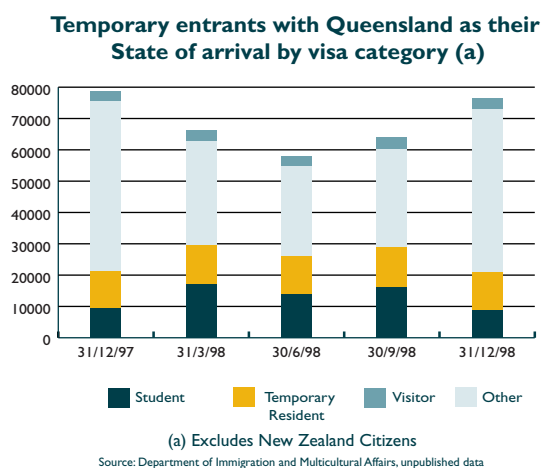


Fig. 5 Temporary entrants with Queensland as their State of arrival by visa category

Immigration Projections

The Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs expects significant reductions in migration applications to Australia in the future.¹ This is due to policy changes to lower the intake levels of settlers under the nation's immigration program, combined with changes introduced in 1996-97 which prevent migrants from becoming eligible to receive a range of social security allowances until two years after arrival.²

¹ *Population Projections for Queensland*, Department of Communication and Information, Local Government and Planning, 1998, p. 69

² *ibid*, pp 69-70. This change will soon apply to New Zealand entrants also, and may reduce New Zealand arrivals in the future.

³ *ibid*, pp iv-vii.

Despite this, the numbers of people ultimately migrating to Queensland has grown in recent years. This is expected to continue due to the Commonwealth policy emphasis on skilled and business migrants, of which Queensland attracts a considerable proportion.

General Population Projections

Queensland's overall population is expected to grow from 3.3 million in 1996 to around 5.5 million by the year 2036. The associated projected growth rate is well above the national average. In the past 10 years, Queensland's growth rates have been attributed primarily to interstate migration and, to a much lesser extent, overseas migration, although this situation is changing, as indicated in Figure 3.

Future growth is expected to continue to be concentrated in coastal areas of South East Queensland, Cairns and, to a lesser extent, in urban centres located on Queensland's east coast. In the future, Queensland will have an increasingly ageing population, unless migration profiles alter dramatically.³

Population and Immigration

Overseas migration is just one of the components of population growth. It is important that national population policy is recognised as a separate policy issue from immigration, although the two issues are related. In addition to immigration, population policy must incorporate issues such as the environment, demography, regional development, infrastructure and economic conditions. Nonetheless, it is appropriate for the Government to engage more actively with the Commonwealth in processes of immigration program planning and review.